



The Network

MARCH 2015

13

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Easier, Faster, Better: New Wave of Powerful Hep C Treatments

The hepatitis C virus (Hep C) is the most common blood borne chronic infection in the United States, with an estimated 3.2 million people living with this disease.

Here in California, the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) believes that at least 600,000 Californians are currently infected with Hep C.

These are generally considered to be extremely conservative estimates considering that about one out of every three people infected with Hep C don't know their status.

That's the bad news.

Here's the good news: in the past two years, Hep C treatments have become increasingly effective with shorter treatment periods, milder side effects, and strong cure rates of over 90%!

In fact, a conference full of local doctors and health care providers just learned all about these new opportunities at the

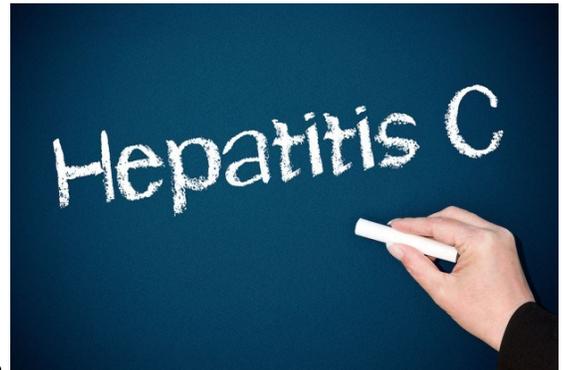
recent AIDS Update Symposium held earlier this month.

Admittedly, these new treatments are not cheap, and it may take some work to

get them through insurance or patient assistance programs, but it's worth it, and we're here to help you along the way!

Here's more good news! If, like thousands of other people, you don't know whether or not you have Hep C, you can get a FREE Hep C screening test and know your status within an hour!

The test is quick, easy, and, thanks to generous funding from Dignity Health Community Grants Program, confidential Hep C testing is now available to you FREE at locations throughout San Luis Obispo County!



Don't wait! Call us or any of our community partners and we'll get you connected to a testing site near you!

The SLO Hep C Project
(805) 543-4372

The Center
(805) 544-2478

The Noor Clinic
(805) 439-1799

Planned Parenthood
(888) 898-3806

FREE HIV Testing at ASN

The ASN offers FREE confidential HIV testing every week!

Come and see us!

WEDNESDAYS:
1 pm to 4:pm

FRIDAYS:
11 am to 3pm

#Follow Us!



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twitter.com/asnslo

@ASNSLO

A New Way to Give: Ralphs & Food4Less

Did you know that the ASN is part of the Community Contribution Program at both Ralphs and Food4Less? All you need is your rewards card!

First, simply register your card online at either food4less.com or ralphs.com.

Next, sign in to your account to view and edit your information.

Once you have access, click on "Community Rewards" and follow the instructions!

You can choose the "AIDS Support Network/SLO Hep C Project NPO #92210" as your preferred community program, and you're all set! (Remember to click on the



circle to the left of our name.)

Now, every time you swipe your card, Ralphs or Food4Less will give a percentage of your purchase to the ASN!



"We are thrilled to announce an upcoming event all about reducing HIV stigma and increasing our community knowledge about PrEP."

May 21st, 2015: #KnowYourStatus @ Cal Poly

We are thrilled to announce an upcoming event all about reducing HIV stigma and increasing our community knowledge about PrEP!

Mario Espinoza, a comparative ethnic studies major and junior at Cal Poly University, and Leah Campbell, ASN volunteer and junior at Cal Poly, are spearheading this event to raise awareness surrounding HIV stigma and prevention. The entire event happens on the campus.

On Thursday, May 21, the event will begin at 11am with a photo campaign at Cal Poly's UU Plaza created to normalize and encourage HIV testing using the social media hashtag #KnowYourStatusCP.

The rest of the day's events all take place in the University Union building located near the large parking garage on Grand Ave.

From 2-3pm, Mario will present his research and findings surrounding HIV stigma and SLO County.

Next, from 4-5:30pm, is the HIV Stigma panel featuring guest speaker Eric Paul Leue, or Mr. LA Leather 2014. Dinner will be served immediately after this panel, between 5:30-6pm.

The final part will be an informative PrEP panel designed to inform the audience about what PrEP is, why it's important, who should use it, and how to get it.

Save the date and be there!

For more information, call us at 805-781-3660.

Your support and the support of local community members and businesses are vital to our continuing ability to provide comprehensive services to our growing number of clients. There are many ways that you can make a generous donation!

- **Money:** ALL MONEY DONATED TO THE ASN IS TAX DEDUCTABLE & REMAINS IN THIS COMMUNITY to help SLO County residents in their struggle with HIV/AIDS and Hep C.
- **Time:** One of the most important ways the SLO community supports the ASN is through the gift of time. Our volunteer program offers opportunities to directly assist clients and help keep the agency streamlined.
- **Food:** ASN's Food Party is always in need of the basics. If you would like to hold a food drive, or donate food directly, we have a list of suggestions for you!

You will make a difference! Contact us, or visit ASN.org, for more details!

You Can
Make a
Difference!

Conversation Starters: Start Talking. Stop HIV.

Adapted from CDC.gov/ActAgainstAids

We've said a whole lot about PrEP (or Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) as the exciting new tool in the HIV prevention toolbox, and it certainly is, but don't forget about the rest of your tools in that box!

Alongside using condoms, one of the most important ones is communication, and knowing how to talk about HIV, sex, and staying safe.

Here are some tips from the [CDC's Act Against AIDS campaign](http://CDC.gov/ActAgainstAids) all about how to get talking!

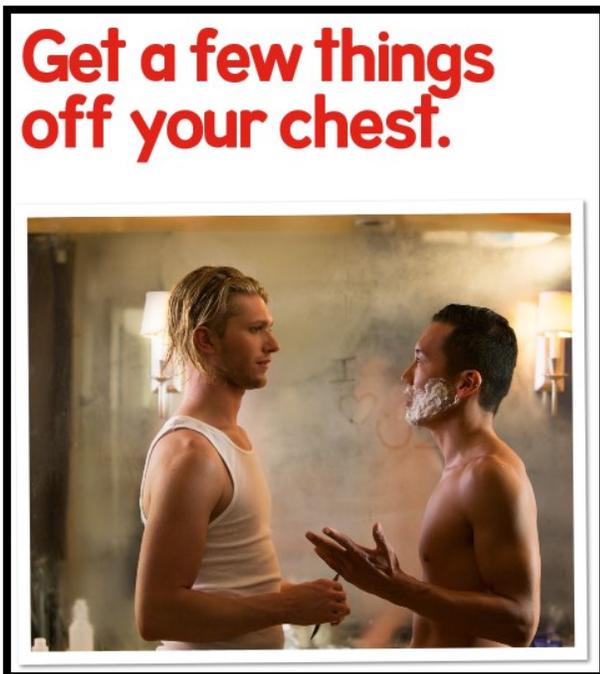
Yeah, you're right it can be awkward sometimes, but try to approach the conversation with confidence.

Chances are that if you're confident and bring it up without judgement, your partner will be just as open to the conversation. After all, they could be trying to bring it up, just like you are!

Remember that nearly everyone who is having sex will have this conversation at

some point, and many others before you have already done it.

Here are some tips that other guys have found helpful in having these conversations:



- Don't wait until the heat of the moment to start talking about HIV. It's better to get that done earlier rather than later, and definitely before you have sex.
- If you're looking for a way to start

the conversation, pull up these adorable videos (we love [THIS](#) one in particular) and use them as a way to start the conversation.

Approaching the conversation like this shows that it's not that you don't trust them, but rather you've been hearing about it, and because you care, you want to make sure you're both protected.

- Don't force it. Find the right time and place to talk. Whether it's scheduled or spontaneous, it's important to be somewhere you both are comfortable.
- Some men living with HIV suggest that it helps to talk about their status early in a relationship, rather than later.
- Try scheduling regular check-ins, or "talkiversaires." One key to a thriving relationship is having a consistent open dialogue. It can be hard to find a good time to bring these things up, but if you schedule in advance, no one has to wonder about it'll happen.
- Last, your conversation doesn't have to be face-to-face. Whether you talk, type, or text, what's important is that you start and keep the conversation going about HIV.

The ASN Housing staff are actively recruiting landlords interested in learning more about the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program.

We have several clients who are seeking rentals willing to accept these HCVs.



For more information, please call 805-781-3660 and speak with Elena.



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 P.O. Box 12158
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Physical Address:
 1320 Nipomo St.
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Phone: 805-781-3660
800-491-9141
Fax: 805-781-3664

The San Luis Obispo County AIDS Support Network remains the sole community-based, non-profit organization in this county that provides supportive services to residents living with HIV disease & AIDS, and their families and friends.

The SLO Hep C Project is dedicated to meeting the needs of people living with hepatitis C and increasing public awareness through educational outreach in SLO County.

The agency strives to improve the quality of life and independence of its clients by providing support on an individual basis.

Learn more at ASN.org & SLOHepC.org

Upcoming Events & Opportunities!

We are proud to offer our community a wide variety of **volunteer opportunities**. You're sure to find one that's perfect for you!

Front Desk Volunteer:

Our front desk volunteers are the back bone of the office. They direct phone calls, greet incoming clients, help with distributing food from our pantry, and overall help to keep us sane! We love, LOVE, our front desk volunteers!

Direct Client Services:

There is always a need for a variety of services, including companionship, meal delivery & preparation, housekeeping, gardening, transportation for medical visits or groceries, pet care, and other invaluable services.

Contact us for more details!



Upcoming Events:

Drive-Thru BBQ Fundraiser!

May 13th, 2015
 Open: 3 pm - 7 pm
 First Baptist Church, SLO
 2075 Johnson Avenue
 San Luis Obispo, CA

The Only Drive-Thru in SLO City!

Get Your Tickets

Now!:

www.ASN.org

\$40 Ticket Includes:

- A Whole Tri-Tip!
- 4 Ears of Roasted Corn
- BBQ Beans
- Garlic Bread

\$20 Ticket Includes:

- A Half Tri-Tip!
- 2 Ears of Roasted Corn
- BBQ Beans
- Garlic Bread

For more information, visit www.ASN.org